

that a State legislature is going to intervene in their parenting decisions and hurt their child.

So we have to push back against these attacks on trans kids in every way that we can—in the courts, with legislation, through Executive action, and by speaking out and speaking up because I can tell you, having just talked to my constituents in Washington State, the hurt and fear the Governor of Texas has caused is not staying in Texas. What Greg Abbott said about trans kids has an effect on many States. I wish it didn't, but the truth is: All of those measures are not only really scary for trans families across the country, but they also embolden more hateful rhetoric and even violence against trans people; and it is harming trans kids' mental health no matter where they live.

We have to be louder than Greg Abbott or whoever is taking aim at trans kids. We have to push for legislation like the Equality Act that would send a powerful message of support and fairness for trans and gay Americans. And we have to stand up for a future without this hateful hate, harm, and division that we are seeing and with a lot more compassion for each other. It is not too much to ask.

NOMINATION OF JOHN H. CHUN

Mr. President, I also rise today to urge my colleagues to join me this evening in voting to confirm Judge John Chun for a Federal district court judgeship in the Western District of Washington State.

Judge Chun is a Pacific Northwest native. He is a father. He is the son of South Korean immigrants. He would be the first Asian-American man to serve on Washington State's Federal bench.

He is patient and thoughtful, someone the people of Washington State can really count on to faithfully uphold the rule of law and treat litigants and all parties before him with grace and respect. Judge Chun's qualifications are superb, having served for 7 years now as a State court judge. His temperament and record of service demonstrate a real commitment to fairness and impartiality, whether through his service as a board member for the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance or his many pro bono commitments over the course of a very long career as both an attorney and a judge.

For all these reasons and more, Judge Chun's service as Federal district court judge in my home State of Washington would surely help rebuild faith in our judicial system. I respectfully am here today to urge my colleagues to confirm Judge Chun.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 493

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I come today to the floor with a very simple unanimous consent request.

This is a resolution. It doesn't allocate any dollars, doesn't change any policy. It is just a statement of belief

from the U.S. Senate. It is a statement to be able to say we hold certain things very important.

I will talk through some of the resolution part of it—the resolve at the beginning of it—but it ends with a very simple statement. It ends with:

Resolved, That the Senate—(1) recognizes and promotes the importance of parental involvement in their child's education; and (2) recognizes the necessity of school choices as a tool to empower all parents with the freedom to choose the best educational environment for their children and to reject destructive ideologies promoted by many public schools, such as Critical Race Theory.

This comes from a basic conversation that happens in my State and, quite frankly, in States all around the country. Parents should be the primary decision-makers for their children—not only where they are educated so that they don't live in a certain neighborhood and they say, I am sorry, you live there so you have to go here.

This is so the parents have the maximum amount of flexibility knowing one child may be a great fit for one school, and the younger child may be a better fit for a different school, whether that be a public school that allows flexibility within a district to be able to move place to place or, as it happens in my State, where you can even change district to district within public schools.

If a parent maybe works in one area—one school district—but lives in another, that parent can choose to be able to have their child go into a different district. Though it is a public school setting, it gives them the flexibility and the choice to do that. Why? Because not every kid is the same and not every educational environment is the same.

I would say in my State—and I would assume in other States as well—not every school district is the same. It is important to us in our State that every school district is successful. There is no place that we don't want any child to be able to be successful.

But we should all admit the facts: Not every school district is thriving. As we invest dollars and time and encourage great teaching in that district, that child who is in that district that is not being successful is trapped in a location that is currently not successful. Maybe they can be successful in 5 years from now when they work through the different issues they have, but that child doesn't have a second shot.

If that child has no other opportunity to be able to choose and their parents are locked into that spot, we basically say, We will fix everything in this district in a few years, and that child is just not allowed to get an option out. I don't think that is helpful for that child and that parent at that time.

Giving parents the ability to be able to make choices—whether public schools, charter schools, private schools—whatever may work best for their school and for their State and the policies their State has created seems like a smart thing to be able to do.

Any kind of teaching that is within a school that actually promotes one kid as the oppressor and the other kid as the oppressed simply because of the color of their skin should not be taught in our schools. Why don't we teach every child is equal? Why don't we teach every child should have opportunity? Why don't we teach every family has the opportunity in this great country of ours; and where we have weaknesses, we work on our weaknesses? But we don't label a child as an oppressor or as oppressed based on the color of their skin—at least we used to not in America.

But that is what is rising up with this critical race theory as it rises up from place to place. I have had many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle saying: That is not true. That is not being taught.

Great. Let's make the resolution. Let's say that we as a Senate don't believe that this should be taught. Let's teach every child. Let's love every child.

This resolution also affirms the rights of parents to be able to speak out—not in a violent way, not in a destructive way, but for parents to be able to speak out.

Why is it that several months ago, the Department of Justice in our Nation starts a whole investigation on parents to be able to say: Are there parents who are actually maybe closet terrorists who are showing up at school board meetings, complaining about what is being taught, complaining about a mask mandate in their school, complaining about a vaccine mandate, complaining about critical race theory, or just saying “I don't like this particular curriculum”?

That used to be the rights of parents, to engage, and now we hear: Really, parents don't know enough about these difficult things. Parents need to just sit down over there. We will take care of this as professionals.

So, again, this resolution doesn't add additional funding. It doesn't change the structure of our schools. But it does say: We as the Senate believe in the power of the parent to be able to make the right choice for their children.

So, with that, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to my resolution, S. Res. 493. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I got my start in national politics as a parent advocating for my kids' preschool program. I am a former preschool teacher. I am a former school board member. I

am now chair of the Senate Education Committee. I have worked across the aisle on fixing No Child Left Behind. I have also fought against efforts—many during the former administration with Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education—because I felt they took us further from the goal of making sure that every student in our country, no matter who they are or where they live or how much money their parents make, can get an excellent public education and all the opportunity that comes with it.

All this is to say that I could not care more deeply about making sure every child gets the chance to learn and succeed in life, and my belief that parents should be as involved as possible in their kids' education could not be more firmly or personally held. In fact, I can remember the times when, as a U.S. Senator with young kids at home myself, I would try to read all my memos at night and help with their homework. I wanted my own kids to have that support from me, just like I want every parent to be able to be on top of what is going on in their kids' school.

I also know from talking to my own family and so many students and families across Washington State that these last two years have been some of the toughest, most overwhelming times for parents and kids that many of us can remember.

Here in the Senate, our job is to recognize that and do everything we can to get things back on track, which is why Democrats acted quickly to pass the American Rescue Plan and give schools the resources they need so they could reopen and stay open safely.

We also recognized that after 2 really disruptive years, many students would need extra help, so the American Rescue Plan is, as we speak right now, paying for afterschool programs and tutors and summer learning so students all across the country can catch up.

I will remind you that this bill to help reopen schools safely and keep them open passed with zero Republican votes—not one. Not only that, Senate Republicans have come to the floor twice last month alone with ideas about snatching Federal funding away from our schools, and Republican leaders even rolled out a plan that would eliminate the Department of Education altogether. Could there be a clearer message about their priorities?

At all times but especially after the last 2 years, there is no excuse for anything short of an all-hands-on-deck national effort to put students' education first, but, unfortunately, here is what we have got happening: Democrats acted to reopen our schools safely and keep them open. Congressional Republicans, down to the last one, voted no.

Democrats believe that quality public education for every student is a good investment. The Republican Party keeps putting forward ideas to gut public education. Democrats want

to lower student debt and the cost of tuition. Republicans are virtually nowhere to be seen on those issues. Democrats want students to learn. Republican legislatures across the country want to ban books.

To sum it up, Democrats want every student to have the ability to get a great education. We are focused on that. We are serious about it, and we are working on it. Meanwhile, Republicans at all levels—and the resolution we are debating today is a case in point—want to use students and parents and schools as political pawns rather than focusing on making sure every single student in our country can get a high-quality education and be able to succeed.

In fact, I just spoke this afternoon with trans kids and parents about what is going on in Texas and other parts of the country. These kids are brave, but they are scared. Their parents are worried about being investigated by the State just because a politician has decided he doesn't like how they are raising their kids.

How are kids supposed to focus on learning when their safety is in question? How are their friends supposed to focus on learning when their classmates are dealing with something like this? Why are parents having to worry about whether they will get investigated for raising their kids according to their beliefs, their doctor's advice, and their kids' needs?

When and if Senate Republicans are truly serious about focusing on getting American students the great education they need and deserve, we will know because Republicans and Democrats might be able to come together again and put students and parents and schools first. I know that is possible because I have worked with Republicans to make this happen.

So today I would like to give my colleague an opportunity to take the first step in the right direction. In a moment, I will ask consent to pass a bill that would help our students.

If we agree we want parents involved in their kids' education and if we agree that this is a moment when students, like so many Americans, are stressed and need us to have their backs, which I really hope we do, then let's send more counselors and nurses to our Nation's schools. Let's prioritize STEM education and advanced coursework and make them available to more of our K-12 students. Let's make students' mental health a top priority so they can focus on learning.

So I will be asking unanimous consent on legislation that would help us all do this—importantly, in a way that seeks parents' input directly on what will matter most to their kids and their communities.

If you are trying to get our schools back on track, this should be an easy yes vote because it will be a vote for students' education, parents' peace of mind, and actually doing something real about the tough challenges students and parents are facing.

I hope my friend from Oklahoma will support it and that moving forward, Republicans will take education as seriously as they claim to and reverse course and join us in working to meet this moment for students' and parents' sake.

At this time, I object to the Senator from Oklahoma's unanimous consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mrs. MURRAY. As if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the Murray bill, which is at the desk, a bill to appropriate funds for students' academic and mental health needs. Further, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I appreciate the dialogue on education. A degree is an education. My mom is a lifelong educator. I spent my summers growing up in the school library, putting books in the Dewey Decimal System, putting the new piece of tape on the outside of it, and actually, back in the old days, filing a new card in the card catalog, which half the people listening to me right now have no idea what that is.

I am passionate about education. I have two daughters, and I stay very engaged in the issue of education. So it is always interesting to me when my Democratic colleagues say: When Republicans get serious about education.

It is always interesting. We will pass a bill, like what happened in the omnibus or what happened in any Education bill before, and there will be billions and billions of dollars in education, but the comment will always be "Well, if you really loved kids, you would do just \$1 billion more, but because you don't love kids, you did \$1 billion less." It is never enough on it.

This resolution that I brought today was not about an extra \$1.3 billion in education to be able to hire more people; it was just about empowering parents.

It is an interesting side by side to say what families need more is more employees at school, and what I am seeing is that we need more empowerment of parents.

One costs \$1.3 billion; the other one is just free. One says: Let's have folks at school know how to be able to take care of your kids best. The other one says: Well, let's make sure there are certain things, like critical race theory, that we don't teach at school to make sure every child is taught the same. And if that parent wants to teach that at home, they are welcome to teach that at home, but let's not impose that on every child. Let's not call some children oppressors because of the color of their skin.

Why don't we do that?

So the resolution I brought is not about a billion dollars; it is just a statement of support of parents, a statement of support of what parents want to be able to teach. It is not about more school employees; it is about stronger parents. That is what I think that we ought to continue to be able to address.

This is not about who loves education more. Quite frankly, I know my colleague from Washington is passionate about kids and about education. She has lived it as a mom, as a leader in the Senate, and as someone I watched negotiate with Lamar Alexander some of the toughest education policy conversations. She is a remarkable legislator and is passionate about this.

We have some disagreements on some of these issues. I am just passionate about doing whatever we can to be able to honor parents as often as we can and to tell them: No, you are not going to be investigated.

She mentioned parents in Texas being worried about being investigated. I will tell you, parents in Oklahoma have said to me: I no longer go to school board meetings because I am afraid the FBI is going to be there and they are going to open a case on me. I have heard that the Attorney General is looking for parents who are problems across the country, and so I don't feel comfortable going to a school board meeting anymore because the U.S. Attorney General may open a file on me.

Now, that is a real conversation with a parent at home.

So let's find a way to be able to empower parents and do whatever we can. So I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. First, I would ask consent that I be able to complete my brief remarks before the vote starts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF JULIE REBECCA RUBIN

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the confirmation of Baltimore City Circuit Court Judge Julie Rubin to be a U.S. district judge for the District of Maryland. I recommended Judge Rubin, along with Senator VAN HOLLEN, to President Biden, and we strongly support her nomination.

Judge Rubin has been nominated to fill the vacancy created when Judge Ellen Hollander, appointed by President Obama in 2011, announced her intentions to take senior status.

President Biden nominated Judge Rubin for this position on December 3 of last year, and the Judiciary Committee held her confirmation hearing on December 15. Judge Rubin was favorably reported by the Judiciary Committee on January 20 of this year by a bipartisan vote.

She received a unanimous "well qualified" rating from the American Bar Association Standing Committee

on the Federal Judiciary, which is the organization's highest rating. The ABA assesses the nominee's professional competency, integrity, and judicial temperament.

Shortly after the November 2020 Presidential elections, I worked with Senator VAN HOLLEN to establish the judicial selection committee in Maryland. We used an open application process with public advertisement and communicated closely with State, local, and specialty bar associations in Maryland. In particular, we sought out highly qualified and diverse applicants. Our committee interviewed everyone who submitted an application, which involved several dozen interviews. Senator VAN HOLLEN and I personally interviewed several finalists before recommending names to the White House.

Born in Baltimore, Judge Rubin received her B.A. cum laude from Mount Holyoke College in 1995 and her J.D. from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1998.

She worked at Astrachan Gunst, handling intellectual property and employment law matters in both Federal and State court.

Judge Rubin was appointed by the Governor of Maryland in 2012 as a Baltimore City circuit judge and was elected in 2014 by the people of Baltimore to a 15-year term.

The circuit court is the State trial court of general jurisdiction in Maryland, covering both civil and criminal cases, and is the exclusive court for jury trials, including felony trials—similar jurisdiction to what the Federal district court handles. So she has that experience.

Judge Rubin brings tremendous experience to the courtroom as a sitting Baltimore City circuit judge for nearly a decade. She has handled a substantial and diverse caseload in our State court in Baltimore, having served in the civil, family, criminal, and general trial divisions, as well as serving on special assignments to the asbestos docket. She previously served as a supervisory judge of alternative dispute resolutions. She estimates that she has presided over about 1,000 criminal and civil cases that have gone to verdict or judgment, including both bench and jury trials.

Judge Rubin is known as a judge's judge, in terms of her excellent temperament, work ethic, and congeniality with lawyers and litigants. She is known to be fair in judgment to all litigants. She was selected to serve as a faculty member of the Judicial College and tasked with instructing newly appointed Maryland trial judges on judicial ethics and best courtroom practices.

Judge Rubin has continued to give back to the community as an adjunct legal professor at the Maryland Law School. She cochaired the Bench Bar Committee of the Bar Association of Baltimore City, served on the board of the Baltimore Metropolitan Chapter of the Simon E. Sobeloff Law Society,

and assisted the CollegeBound Foundation and the Baltimore Education Scholarship Trust to help underprivileged or at-risk youth. She has served as chair of the board of trustees for the Bryn Mawr School in Baltimore. She has given back to our community and understands the challenges in our community.

As a fellow graduate of the University of Maryland Francis King Carey Law School, I am confident that Judge Rubin will meet the highest standards of integrity, competence, and temperament. I know she will uphold the rule of law for all Marylanders for this lifetime appointment.

Finally, let me say that I know that public service is a sacrifice, not only for the nominee but for their family. So I want to thank Judge Rubin's husband James and her entire family for sharing Judge Rubin with the people of Maryland.

Judge Rubin's confirmation will build on the quality and diversity of the Maryland District Court bench. All 10 of the confirmed judges have been recommended by me to the President for appointment as a Senator from Maryland. I am proud of their qualifications and diversity.

In Maryland, our Federal bench is 50 percent women, 50 percent men, 40 percent people of color. We appointed the first African-American woman, the first person of Palestinian descent. We have a diversified, quality bench representing the people of Maryland and providing the justice the people of Maryland deserve.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the confirmation of Judge Julie Rubin to be a U.S. district judge for the District of Maryland.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 683, Julie Rebecca Rubin, of Maryland, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maryland.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Gary C. Peters, Edward J. Markey, Ben Ray Lujan, Martin Heinrich, Tammy Baldwin, Jacky Rosen, Jeff Merkley, Raphael G. Warnock, Michael F. Bennet, Tammy Duckworth, Angus S. King, Jr., Alex Padilla, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Margaret Wood Hassan, Patrick J. Leahy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Julie Rebecca Rubin, of Maryland,